

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for processing information related to sales of a food product, said food product including a number of ingredients, said method comprising:

10 determining a number of said food products which have been scheduled to be prepared for sale during a predetermined period of time; and

15 accessing a database to determine a reference number of food products which have been sold during a corresponding past period of time.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including:

20 adjusting said number of food products scheduled for preparation in accordance with said referenced number.

25 3. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said database further includes information related to a stated reason for said reference number.

4. The method as set forth in claim 3 wherein said information related to said stated reason for said reference number is presented on a display device.

30 5. The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein food products which have been prepared for sale are placed in predetermined holding locations pending an order for a sale,

the number of said food products which are available for sale being determined by product detecting means.

6. The method as set forth in claim 5 wherein said product  
5 detecting means is a light sensing device.

7. The method as set forth in claim 5 wherein said product detecting means is a weight sensing device.

10 8. The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including:  
  
maintaining a record of current inventory levels of said ingredients.

15 9. The method as set forth in claim 8 and further including determining an occurrence of a sale of one of said food products; and

adjusting an inventory level of one or more ingredients  
20 comprising said food product in response to said sale.

10. The method as set forth in claim 9 and further including providing notice of low inventory levels when said inventory levels fall below a predetermined reference level.

25 11. The method as set forth in claim 9 and further including automatically ordering amounts of said one or more ingredients when said inventory levels for said one or more ingredients falls below said reference levels.

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12. The method as set forth in claim 11 wherein said ordering is accomplished by sending an electronically generated message to a supplier of said one or more ingredients.

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13. The method as set forth in claim 12 wherein said electronically generated message is an email sent from a restaurant server system to a supplier server system.

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14. A method for processing information related to a food product preparation operation wherein food products are prepared from ingredients and offered for sale, said food products being maintained in a prepared state pending a sale of said food products, said method comprising:

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marking a preparation time when a food product has been prepared;

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detecting a continuing presence of said food product in said prepared state; and

after a selected time period, disposing of any of said prepared food products which have not been sold for more than a predetermined period of time since being prepared.

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15. The method as set forth in claim 14 and further including adjusting an amount of prepared food products available for sale if said amount of disposed of food products exceeds a predetermined acceptable amount.

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16. The method as set forth in claim 15 and further including recording said amount of disposed of food products as waste information in a database whereby said amount of prepared food products is adjusted in accordance with said recorded waste information in said database.

17. The method as set forth in claim 14 and further including:

10 determining amounts of wasted ingredients for said disposed of food products;

recording said amount of said wasted ingredients in a database; and

15 adjusting amounts of ingredients on hand for the preparation of said food products in accordance with said amounts of said wasted ingredients.

20 18. A storage medium including machine readable coded indicia, said storage medium being selectively coupled to a reading device, said reading device being selectively coupled to processing circuitry within a computer system, said reading device being selectively operable to read said  
25 machine readable coded indicia and provide program signals representative thereof, said program signals being effective to enable a processing of information related to sales of a food product, said food product including a number of ingredients, said program signals being further effective  
30 for:

determining a number of said food products which have been scheduled to be prepared for sale during a predetermined period of time; and

- 5    accessing a database to determine a reference number of food products which have been sold during a corresponding past period of time.

- 10    19. The medium as set forth in claim 18 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

adjusting said number of food products scheduled for preparation in accordance with said referenced number.

- 15    20. The medium as set forth in claim 19 wherein said database further includes information related to a stated reason for said reference number.

- 20    21. The medium as set forth in claim 20 wherein said information related to said stated reason for said reference number is presented on a display device.

- 25    22. The medium as set forth in claim 18 wherein food products which have been prepared for sale are placed in predetermined holding locations pending an order for a sale, the number of said food products which are available for sale being determined by product detecting means.

- 30    23. The medium as set forth in claim 22 wherein said product detecting means is a light sensing device.

28. The medium as set forth in claim 26 wherein said program signals are further effective for automatically ordering amounts of said one or more ingredients when said inventory levels for said one or more ingredients falls below said reference levels.

29. The medium as set forth in claim 28 wherein said ordering is accomplished by sending an electronically generated message to a supplier of said one or more ingredients.

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30. The medium as set forth in claim 29 wherein said electronically generated message is an email sent from a restaurant server system to a supplier server system.

10 31. A storage medium including machine readable coded indicia, said storage medium being selectively coupled to a reading device, said reading device being selectively coupled to processing circuitry within a computer system, said reading device being selectively operable to read said  
15 machine readable coded indicia and provide program signals representative thereof, said program signals being effective to enable a processing of information related to a food product preparation operation wherein food products are prepared from ingredients and offered for sale, said food  
20 products being maintained in a prepared state pending a sale of said food products, said program signals being further effective for:

effecting a marking of a preparation time when a food  
25 product has been prepared;

causing a detecting of a continuing presence of said food product in said prepared state; and

30 after a selected time period, effecting a disposing of any of said prepared food products which have not been sold for

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more than a predetermined period of time since being prepared.

32. The medium as set forth in claim 31 wherein said program  
5 signals are further effective for adjusting an amount of prepared food products available for sale if said amount of disposed of food products exceeds a predetermined acceptable amount.

10 33. The medium as set forth in claim 31 wherein said program signals are further effective for:

determining amounts of wasted ingredients for said disposed  
of food products;

15 storing said amount of said wasted ingredients in a database; and

adjusting amounts of ingredients on hand for preparation of  
20 said food products in accordance with said amounts of said wasted ingredients.

34. A computer system comprising:

25 a system bus;

a CPU device connected to said system bus;

a memory device connected to said system bus;

30 a user display device connected to said system bus; and



connection means arranged to connect said computer system to a network, said computer system being selectively operable for implementing a method for processing information related to sales of a food product, said food product including a  
5 number of ingredients, said method comprising:

determining a number of said food products which have been scheduled to be prepared for sale during a predetermined period of time; and

10 accessing a database in said computer system to determine a reference number of food products which have been sold during a corresponding past period of time.

15 35. The computer system as set forth in claim 34 and further including means for adjusting said number of food products scheduled for preparation in accordance with said referenced number.

20 36. The computer system as set forth in claim 35 wherein said database further includes information related to a stated reason for said reference number.

25 37. The computer system as set forth in claim 36 wherein said information related to said stated reason for said reference number is presented on said display device.

30 38. A computer system for processing information related to a food product preparation operation wherein food products are prepared from ingredients and offered for sale, said food products being maintained in a prepared state pending a sale of said food products, said computer system comprising:

a system bus;

a CPU device connected to said system bus;

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a memory device connected to said system bus;

a user display device connected to said system bus; and

10 connection means arranged to connect said computer system to  
a network, said computer system being selectively operable  
for marking a preparation time when a food product has been  
prepared, and detecting a continuing presence of said food  
product in said prepared state, said computer system being  
15 further operable for periodically disposing of any of said  
prepared food products which have not been sold for more  
than a predetermined period of time since being prepared.

39. The computer system as set forth in claim 38 and further  
20 including means for adjusting an amount of prepared food  
products available for sale if said amount of disposed of  
food products exceeds a predetermined acceptable amount.

40. The computer system as set forth in claim 39 and further  
25 including means for determining amounts of wasted  
ingredients for said disposed of food products and means for  
adjusting amounts of ingredients on hand for the preparation  
of said food products in accordance with said amounts of  
said wasted ingredients.

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